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Other Types of Aggressive Behavior

There are many other types of [aggressive behavior](#) that don't fit the [definition of bullying](#). This does not mean that they are any less serious or require less attention than bullying. Rather, these behaviors require different prevention and response strategies.

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Early Childhood

Early childhood often marks the first opportunity for young children to interact with each other. Between the ages of 3 and 5, kids are learning how to get along with each other, cooperate, share, and understand their feelings. Young children may be aggressive and act out when they are angry or don't get what they want, but this is not bullying. Still, there are ways to help children.

Helping Young Children Get Along with Others

Parents, school staff, and other adults can help young children develop skills for getting along with others in age-appropriate ways.

- Model positive ways for young children to make friends. For example, practice pleasant ways that children can ask to join others in play and take turns in games. Coach older children to help reinforce these behaviors as well. Praise children for appropriate behavior. Help young children understand what behaviors are friendly.
- Help young children learn the consequences of certain actions in terms they can understand. For example, say "if you don't share, other children may not want to play with you." Encourage young children to tell an adult if they are treated in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, upset or unhappy, or if they witness other children being harmed.
- Set clear rules for behavior and monitor children's interactions carefully. Step in quickly to stop aggressive behavior or redirect it before it occurs.
- Use age-appropriate consequences for aggressive behavior. Young children should be encouraged to say "I'm sorry" whenever they hurt a peer, even accidentally. The apology should also be paired with an action. For example, young children could help rebuild a knocked over block structure or replace a torn paper or crayons with new ones.

Peer Conflict

It is not bullying when two kids with no perceived power imbalance fight, have an argument, or disagree. Conflict resolution or peer mediation may be appropriate for these situations.

Teen Dating Violence

[Teen dating violence](#) is intimate partner violence that occurs between two young people who are, or once were, in a relationship.

Hazing

Hazing is the use of embarrassing and often dangerous or illegal activities by a group to initiate new members.

Gang Violence

There are specialized approaches to addressing violence and aggression within or between [gangs](#).

Harassment

Although bullying and harassment sometimes overlap, not all bullying is harassment and not all harassment is bullying. Under [federal civil rights laws](#), harassment is unwelcome conduct based on a protected class (race, national origin, color, sex, age, disability, religion) that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and creates a hostile environment.

Stalking

[Stalking](#) is repeated harassing or threatening behavior such as following a person, damaging a person's property, or making harassing phone calls.

Young Adults and College Students

Behaviors that are traditionally considered bullying among school-aged youth often require new attention and strategies in young adults and college students. Many of these behaviors are considered crimes under state and federal law and may trigger serious consequences after the age of 18.

Is it Bullying?

Although media reports often call unwanted, aggressive behavior among young adults "[bullying](#)," this is not exactly accurate. Many state and federal laws address bullying-like behaviors in this age group under very serious terms, such as hazing, harassment, and stalking. Additionally, most young adults are uncomfortable with the term bullying—they associate it with school-aged children.

How Young Adults Can Get Help

- Encourage young adults to talk to someone they trust.
- Determine if the behavior violates campus policies or laws. Review student codes of conduct, state criminal laws, and [civil rights laws](#).

- Report criminal acts to campus or community law enforcement.
- Consult the college's Title IX coordinator to help determine if the behavior is sexual harassment.
- Many college campuses also have an ombudsperson or similar person who handles a variety of concerns and complaints. He or she can help direct the young adult to appropriate campus resources.
- Young adults may be reluctant to seek help for cyberbullying, although they do recognize it as a serious issue for their age group. Encourage young adults to [report cyberbullying](#).
- Learn more about the spectrum from cyberbullying to online harassment to cyber hate and how to [protect safe cyberspace](#).

Additional Resources

Contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) online or at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). The toll-free call goes to the nearest crisis center in our national network. These centers provide 24-hour crisis counseling and mental health referrals.

Find a local [counselor or other mental health services](#).

Workplace Bullying

The term bullying is typically used to refer to behavior that occurs between school-aged kids. However, adults can be repeatedly aggressive and use power over each other, too. [Adults in the workplace](#) have a number of different laws that apply to them that do not apply to kids.

Hate Crimes

According to the Department of Justice, [hate crimes](#) are defined, at the federal level, as a crime motivated by bias against race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, or disability. Acts of prejudice that are not crimes and do not involve violence, threats, or property damage are called bias or hate incidents.

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Was this page helpful?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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